

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



August 20, 1982

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 1-113-82

TO: All County Welfare Directors
All Chief Probation Officers
All County Mental Health Directors
All Public and Private Adoption Agency Directors
All Regional Center Directors

SUBJECT: Foster Care Information System - SOC 158 Data Elements Requiring
Completion by Professional Staff

The Foster Care Information System (FCIS) Reporting Instructions Manual initially required that all data elements be entered on the Foster Child's Data Record (SOC 158) by professional staff, either social workers or probation officers. Since then, at the June 29, 1982 meeting of the FCIS Advisory Committee concerns were raised that a significant number of the elements on the SOC 158 could be more efficiently completed by nonprofessional staff. Advisory committee members researched the issue and submitted recommendations as to which elements could be readily extracted from the case file and which would require the use of professional judgment. The committee found that professional judgment must be used for some, but not all, of the data elements on the SOC 158. Those requiring judgment or interpretation must be entered by social workers or probation officers.

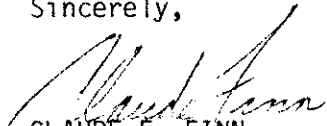
As a result of these efforts, the Department of Social Services (DSS) has modified the requirement that all data elements must be completed by professional staff. Those elements which must, at a minimum, continue to be completed by the social worker or probation officer responsible for the case are: "Reason for Removal from Home" (D4); "Case Plan Goal" (I1); "Services Planned" and "Provided" (I2-11, J2-11, and K2-11); date and reason for "Services Case Termination" (L5); and "Case Review Determination" (M1-5). Depending on the structure of the case file, there may be additional situations where other elements also require professional judgment. In those instances it is incumbent on the local agency to ensure that the necessary professional judgment is reflected in the data collected. An update to the FCIS Reporting Instructions Manual will be forthcoming to reflect this modification in DSS policy.

Committee members also found that some agencies maintain a highly organized and extensively documented case recording system which enables nonprofessional staff to accurately complete all elements on the SOC 158. In view of this the Department will consider granting waivers from the above requirements on an individual basis for those agencies which operate under such a system. Any requests for waivers must be submitted with a detailed explanation of that agency's case recording procedures to:

State Department of Social Services
Family and Children's Services Systems Bureau
744 P Street, M.S. 9-102
Sacramento, CA 95814

If you have any questions regarding this information notice, please contact Ted Spelis, Family and Children's Services Systems Bureau at (916) 323-2923.

Sincerely,



CLAUDE E. FINN
Deputy Director

cc: Paul Allen, President, County Welfare Directors Association
Ralph Stanford, President, California Probation Officers Association